

Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board

2013 Annual Report

Convenor: Roger Brook

Clerk: Craig MacIntyre

Board Members:

Board Members Elected in 2012 for 3 year period	Representing Sub-District
Ross Appleyard	Add
Robert White	Add
Stephen Gibbs	Arran
Mrs Caroline Fleming	Arran
Mrs Rosie Campbell-Preston	Awe
Roger Brook	Awe (Convenor)
David Stewart	Creran
Dominique Collinet	Creran
Andrew Montgomery	Fyne
Mrs Tuggy Delap	Fyne
Michael Handley	Nell
Mrs Beth Nicholson	Nell
Iain McArthur	Ormsary
Andrew Barker	Ruel
Salmon Angling Representatives	
Richard McKenzie	Loch Awe Improvement Association
Andrew MacGregor	Isle of Bute Angling Association
Willie Shaw	Carradale & District Angling Club
Jolyon Small	Lochgilphead & District Angling Club
William Duff	Dunoon & District Angling Club
Laurance Larmour	Oban & Lorne Angling Club
Tenant Netsman Representative	
James Middleton	Loch Fyne

1. Introduction

The Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board encompasses mainland Argyll and the Isles of Bute and Arran, from the West shore of Loch Long in the East, to the Mull of Kintyre in the South and Glen Creran in the North. It does not include the Isles of Islay, Jura or Mull, nor the Eachaig District near Dunoon. There are 41 river catchments contained within the board area, with 68 separate salmon netting rights identified and 127 salmon rod fishing rights.

2. Report on 2013

2.1 Catch Statistics for Salmon and Sea Trout

District	Salmon	Grilse	Salmon Total	Sea Trout Total	Salmon C&R rate	Sea trout C&R Rate	5 Year Average Salmon	5 Year Average Sea Trout
Add	10	2	12	7	58	86	31	2.4
Arran	8	16	24	40	88	85	41.5	93.3
Awe	193	123	316	7	90	100	415.2	24.7
Clyde	0	2	2	27	100	100	6	86.5
Creran	3	5	8	7	88	100	3.2	5.2
Fyne	2	1	3	6	100	100	16.2	22.2
Kintyre	17	34	51	53	35	28	55.1	46
Nell	4	3	7	4	86	100	14.4	11.4
Ruel	7	3	10	42	90	98	6.4	26.6
Totals	244	189	433	193	82	89	589	318.3

2.2 Conservation Policies

The Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board advocates catch and release during these current periods of very poor marine survival. Marine survival rates do fluctuate from year to year, however the Argyll Fisheries Trust has estimated that current return rates for salmon may be as low as 2% of migrating smolts. This compares very poorly with marine survival rates of around 25% that were reported in the 1960s.

2.3 Enforcement Activities

There is one full-time Water Bailiff employed within the Argyll salmon fishery district, who covers the Awe sub-district. There are three part-time Water Bailiffs who cover the Ruel and Awe sub-districts, and eight volunteer warranted Water Bailiffs covering the other sub-districts.

The majority of enforcement activities involve preventing illegal fishing, which do not require police intervention. In 2013, one case of illegal fishing was reported to the Procurator Fiscal, however disappointingly the case was not taken forward. The Argyll DSFB does correspond with police wildlife officers, local police officers, as well as Marine Scotland Compliance.

2.4 Main Issues Affecting Salmon in Argyll

There are a range of issues that have the potential to impact on the abundance of wild migratory salmonid populations, as identified in the Argyll Fisheries Trust's Fishery Management Plan (<http://www.argyllfisheriestrust.co.uk/publications/>). Probably the main impact affecting salmonid populations is the poor marine survival we are currently experiencing, as discussed above. Other

marine issues that have impacted salmon and sea trout are; poorly managed salmon aquaculture, that can lead to harmful infestations of sea lice as smolts are heading out to sea; and general low levels of marine productivity that affect sea trout in particular (sea trout tend to remain in coastal waters, while salmon will migrate to the North Atlantic for their feeding grounds).

In the freshwater habitat, poor commercial forestry practices have impacted on hydrology and habitat availability, and the historical removal of native broadleaf woodlands from many catchments has reduced productivity. Many catchments have been impacted by agriculture, which has resulted in many straightened rivers, unstable river banks due to livestock accessing the river, spawning burns being straightened to improve drainage, and diffuse pollution entering watercourses.

Hydroelectric schemes abstract water from rivers to generate electricity, and therefore the potential is there to impact on salmonids. There are several examples of poor practice from hydro schemes dating back to the 1960s that do impact on salmon and sea trout, however most schemes nowadays are better engineered and managed, and minimise any impact.

Invasive non-native species also have an impact, and in Argyll we have a range of invasive plants including Japanese knotweed, *Rhododendron ponticum* and Giant hogweed. American mink predate on salmon and trout in rivers, however their numbers are falling due to trapping schemes by most estates in Argyll.

2.5 Funding of the Argyll Fisheries Trust

Unfortunately, during these times of very poor salmon and sea trout catches, the level of funding that the Argyll DSFB can provide to the Argyll Fisheries Trust for conservation and improvement is very low. In 2013, AFT received £10,000 through the salmon fishery levy for work in the Awe Catchment, which includes monitoring of the success of salmon spawning with fry surveys, improvements to the river habitat by making new areas of the river accessible for salmon spawning, removal of invasive non-native Japanese knotweed and *Rhododendron ponticum*, and an investigation into factors affecting the productivity of the lower River Orchy.

AFT used money received through the salmon levy for work on the River Goil. AFT are involved with a project part funded by the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park with assistance from the Forestry Commission to improve the habitat on a spawning burn that runs through a farm. The work will involve in-stream improvement and fencing off the burn from livestock.

2.6 Consented Salmon Stocking Activities

In Argyll in 2013 hatchery reared salmon were stocked into seven rivers suffering from poor numbers of returning adult salmon. The Argyll Fisheries Trust recommends that salmon are stocked out as unfed fry, to minimise the adverse effects of introducing hatchery reared fish (see Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) policy on hatcheries at <http://www.rafts.org.uk/rafts-stocking-policy-and-technical-paper-now-available/>). In 2013, around 80,000 fry were consented by the Argyll DSFB to be released into rivers.

2.7 Responding to Development Consultations

The Argyll DSFB is a statutory consultee for planning applications, such as aquaculture, wind farms and hydro schemes that have the potential to affect salmon and trout fisheries in Argyll. Responding to development consultations is an important part of the DSFB's work to protect salmonid populations. Details of the latest developments can be found on the Argyll DSFB website (<http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/consultations-2/>).

In 2013, the Argyll DSFB was consulted on 16 applications for marine aquaculture, 27 applications for hydro electric schemes, and 5 wind farms. The Argyll DSFB will only object to these developments if there is evidence of a significant potential impact on wild salmonid populations.

2.8 Complaints to the Argyll DSFB in 2013.

The Board has set up and maintains a complaints procedure which can be viewed at the Argyll DSFB website (<http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/>). The Argyll DSFB received two complaints in 2013 relating to collection of the salmon fishing rights levy. The complaints were dealt with by writing to the complainants and explaining that the levy must be paid by law.

3. Planned Activities for 2014

3.1 To meet our responsibilities under the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013, the Argyll District Salmon Fishery Board will undertake the following activities in 2014:

- Hold a public meeting in April 2014.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting in April 2014.
- Hold a meeting for Argyll DSFB Board members in October 2014.
- The Argyll DSFB does not intend to amend its conservation policy of recommending Catch and Release.
- The Joint Executive Committee of the Argyll DSFB and Argyll Fisheries Trust will decide on habitat improvements to be undertaken in 2014. The Argyll Fisheries Trust is proceeding with improvements to the old Salmon Cruive on the River Awe, which will increase the available spawning habitat for salmon in the river. Japanese knotweed present in the Awe Catchment will be sprayed in August 2014 as part of the EU funded CIRB project, which the Argyll DSFB is contributing to.
- The Argyll DSFB, in conjunction with the Argyll Fisheries Trust, will review all salmon stocking activities and discuss the implementation of monitoring programmes to assess the effectiveness of hatcheries in the district.

3.2 Annual Accounts.

The accounts for 2013 will be published on the Argyll DSFB website (<http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/>), and are prepared by Simmers & Co, Oban. A copy will be sent to the Scottish Government when approved at the Argyll DSFB Annual General Meeting in April 2014.

3.3 Annual Report

This annual report will be published on the Argyll DSFB website (<http://argyll.dsfb.org.uk/>). A copy will be sent to the Scottish Government when approved at the Argyll DSFB Annual General Meeting in April 2014.

3.4 Members' interests

The register of members' interests is held by the Clerk to the Argyll DSFB at Cherry Park, Inveraray. We have included a standing item at each Board meeting inviting Board members to declare new/amend existing interests and all such instances are recorded in the minutes of these meetings.

Craig MacIntyre

Clerk to the Argyll DSFB

Inveraray

April 2014